ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS SUMMARY WRITING SKILL IN THE KWARA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ILORIN

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Abstract

This present study investigates the attitudes of students towards summary writing skill in the College of Education, Ilorin, a principal skill in academics writing and comprehension. Summary writing enhances students' attitudes to distill crucial information and improve critical thinking. However, obstacles such as low motivation, difficulty with comprehension and limited practice often hinder students' performance in this area. Researchers' designed instrument was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined by adopting a test re-test method and a reliability index of .88 was recorded using PPMC. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings depict that while students recognise the relevance of summary writing, their engagement levels defer significantly. This study explains these attitudes, the implication on academic success, and recommendations to enhance students' outcomes.

Introduction

In academic settings, summary writing is a vital skill, facilitating students' ability to distill salient information, synthesis ideas and demonstrate understanding (Brown, 2021). Summary writing in Nigerian tertiary institutions is a significant component of language and communication course (Adeyemi, 2023). However, students' attitudes towards summary writing vary and can be influenced by diverse factors, including prior exposure to summary techniques, interest in reading and instructional strategies employed by teachers (Adebayo, 2022). This present paper

therefore investigates the attitudes of students at the College of Education, Ilorin towards summary writing and how these attitudes influence their academic performance and skills development.

Literature Review

Relevance of summary writing in Higher Education

Summary writing has long been identified as an essential academic skill which assists students in developing their comprehension and writing ability (White, 2020; Brown, 2021). Johnson and Lee (2021) were of the opinion that summary writing requires students to identify salient ideas and articulate them concisely, which fosters critical thinking and retention, Brown (2021) further explained that, the art of summarizing allows students to distill complex ideas into their essential components, promoting a deeper understanding of

course materials. This particular skill is valuable in Nigerian tertiary institutions, where students are expected to engage with various and often complicated texts/materials (Adeyemi, 2023). Studies have shown that students who excel at summary writing tend to have stronger analytical skills and better retention as summarising encourages them to identify and recollect/recall vital concepts.

Furthermore, summary writing has practical applications across disciplines, as it assists students in preparing for examinations, writing essays and projects and participating in discussions. In the Nigerian education context, Oluwafemi (2022) stressed that summary writing should be key in language curricula to support students' academic and professional readiness.

Student Attitudes towards summary writing

Students' attitudes towards summary writing can significantly influence their motivation to engage in it, as well as their overall performance in academic courses. Researchers have shown that students who view summary writing as a herculean task are less likely to put effort into mastering it, leading to a cycle of underperformance and further frustration (Okoro, 2023). On the other hand, students with positive dispositions towards summary writing often perform better in related tasks as they are more willing to practice and improve their skills (Smith, Johnson & Lee, 2022). Positive engagement with summary writing has been linked to increased reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, as students are encouraged to process information actively and critically (White, 2020). According to Adebayo (2022), factors like prior experience with reading and writing, exposure to effective instructional methods, and overall language proficiency contribute to shaping students attitudes towards summary writing. In turn, these attitudes influence their performance and long-term retention of language skills.

Summary Writing Challenges in Nigerian Colleges of Education

Despite the recognized significance of summary writing, students in College of Education, Ilorin often face particular challenges that influence their ability to perform effectively. Language barriers are a significant issue, specifically for students who have not fully developed their level of proficiency in English (Oluwafemi, 2022). Oluwafemi (2022) further expatiated that many Nigerian students come from various linguistics backgrounds, and in English summary writing can be challenging for those who are still acquiring fluency. In addition, inadequate instructional resources and limited access to reading materials complicate these impediments, leaving students underprepared for academic writing tasks (Eze, 2023).

Okoro (2023) opined that many students struggle with summarising because they lack the strategies for identification of the main ideas and differentiation between critical and supplementary information. In addition to this, feedback from the lecturers' end is often limited, depriving them (students) of guidance on how to enhance their summaries. These impediments can lead to negative attitudes towards summary writing with students perceiving it as overly demanding or confusing

(Adebisi, 2023). Addressing these impediments through supportive teaching methods and resources is vital for fostering positive attitudes and skill development among College students in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of College of Education students towards summary writing?
2. What are the perceived challenges facing College of Education students in summary writing?
3. What are the Instructional practices and supports given to College of Education students to improving on their writing performance?

Methodology

This paper adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 100 students was selected through random sampling from the department of English, College of Education, Ilorin. A structured questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. The questionnaire focused on students' attitudes, perceived challenges, and the influence of instructional practices and supports on their engagement with summary writing. The validity and reliability of the instrument were determined by adopting a test retest method on students outside the study sampled. The test scores were compared using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the reliability index of 0.88 was recorded. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation in answering the formulated research questions for the study. The methodology aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes and the factors influencing their attitudes towards summary writing.

Results and Findings

One hundred respondents were sampled for this study. All the research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. In answering these questions, responses to the items in the questionnaire were collated and subjected to mean and standard deviation analyses. Given that the responses of the respondents on the items were the four Likert scale type of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree which indicate 4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5. Hence, any item with mean score above 2.5 considered high and acceptable, while mean score on any item below 2.5 is considered low and unacceptable. The output is reported.

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of College of Education students towards summary writing?

Table 1: Mean Analysis on the Attitudes of College of Education Students towards Summary Writing

S/N	Attitudes Towards Summary Writing	Mean	St. D.	Remark
1.	I find summary writing task to be an essential/skill for academic success.	3.22	0.98	**Agree**
2.	I am motivated to improve my summary writing skills.	3.46	0.96	**Agree**
3.	I enjoy engaging in summary writing tasks	2.64	1.06	**Agree**
4.	I feel confident in my ability to write concise summaries.	2.54	0.87	**Agree**
5.	I believe summary writing enhances my understanding of reading Texts.	3.1	1.03	**Agree**
6.	Summary writing task is challenging as I struggle to identify major points.	2.43	0.97	**Disagree**

Table 1 reveals the respondents' responses on the attitudes towards summary writing. It can be deduced that out of the six items presented, only item 6 which says "Summary writing task is challenging as I struggle to identify major points" with the mean score 2.43 and standard deviation 0.97, this is disagreed with the mean benchmark less than 2.5. Thus, the finding indicates that NCE students generally have positive attitudes towards summary writing, recognising its significance in academic success.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived challenges facing College of Education students in summary writing?

Table 2: Mean Analysis on the Perceived Challenges Facing Students in Summary Writing

S/N	Perceived Challenges in Summary Writing	Mean	St. D.	Remark
1.	I find it difficult to distil information without losing vital details.	3.16	1.02	**Agree**
2.	I struggle with vocabulary and grammar when writing summary tasks.	3.38	0.88	**Agree**
3.	I often feel anxious about my summary writing skills.	3.08	0.94	**Agree**
4.	I would benefit from more practices in summary writing.	3.24	0.97	**Agree**

Table 2 reveals the respondents' responses on the perceived challenges in summary writing. All the items reflecting various challenges facing the students in summary writing are agreed upon. This shows that most of these students identify the challenges facing them in summary writing.

Research Question 3: What are the Instructional practices and supports given to College of Education students to improving on their writing performance?

Table 3: Mean Analysis on the Instructional Practices and Supports Given to Students to Improving on their Writing Performance

S/N	Instructional practices and support	Mean	St. D.	Remark
1.	My Lecturers normally give clear guidance on how to write summaries.	3.08	0.93	**Agree**
2.	I think that summary writing tasks are well-integrate into my coursework.	3.03	0.86	**Agree**
3.	I would benefit from sample summaries and guidelines.	3.06	0.95	**Agree**
4.	The feedback I received from my lecturers helps me improve my summary writing skills.	3.10	1.01	**Agree**
5.	I believe summary writing will enhance my understanding of reading texts.	2.89	1.11	**Agree**

Table 3 reveals the respondents' responses on the instructional practices and support given by lecturers in summary writing. All the items identifying various instructional practices in summary writing are agreed upon. This shows that students are having instructional practices and supports from their lectures towards their improvement in summary writing.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that NCE students from COED, Ilorin generally have positive attitudes towards summary writing, recognizing its significance in academic success. However, they encountered various impediments, including time constraints, difficulty in identifying salient ideas, and lack of adequate guidance.

1. Mixed attitude: Some of these students appreciate the skill-building nature of summary writing, which others find it challenging and time-consuming.
2. Influence of instructional practices: Effective structured instruction positively influences NCE students' attitudes, while inadequate guidance correlates with lower engagement.
3. Confidence and Self-Efficacy: It was found that confidence in language skills is a

significant predictor of positive attitudes towards summary writing.

4. Challenges in the identification of the salient ideas: Many NCE students of English reported difficulty distinguishing major ideas from minor ones; this affects their confidence and performance.

Discussion

The data revealed mixed attitudes towards summary writing among students in the College of Education, Ilorin. A significant proportion of students expressed a lack of confidence in their summary writing skills, citing difficulty in the identification of the major points and patterning brief summaries. This is in consonance with previous study suggesting that students with low confidence in language skill may avoid/struggle with task involving summary writing (Adebisi, 2023). Nevertheless, students who viewed students at the College of Education, Ilorin. Although, students recognize the importance of summary writings, varying levels of engagement indicate a need for improved instructional methods. Structured, supportive teaching strategies and opportunities for practices may encourage students to approach summary writing task more positively.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered based on the findings from this study:

vii. Improved instructional support: Lecturers of English at the College of Education should incorporate clear, scaffold approaches to teaching summary writing, stressing the identification of the major points and brief expression.

summary writing as positive oriented task noted that it assisted them improve critical thinking and clarity in writing, reflecting the broader literature's findings on summary writing's benefits.

Also, the role of instructional strategies was found to be pivotal. College of Education students who had been exposed to structured summary writing exercises reported greater ease and confidence in the task than those with limited guidance who were more likely to view it as herculean task. This equally supports White (2020) and Okoro (2023), who argued that effective instructional practices can improve College of Education students' attitudes and performance.

Conclusion

This present study highlights the various attitudes towards summary writing among

viii. Increased practice opportunities: Provision of regular low stakes practice tasks (assignments) may aid students to build confidence and improve their skills.

ix. Resource provision: Ensuring that students at this level have direct access to reading materials and online resources for summary writing practice could go a long way to reduce skill gaps.

x. Integration of summary writing in other courses: Embedding summary writing in various disciplines, such as General studies in Education (GSE English) and primary Education Studies which could reinforce its significance and assist students see its practical application.

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